

Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority
Minutes of the October 25, 2005, Meeting
Held at Valparaiso Public Library
6:30 P.M.

Chairman John Clark called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance. It was noted that a quorum was present with all board members, John Clark, Howard Cohen, Bill Joiner, Lou Martinez, Gus Olympidis, Ned Ruff, and Harley Snyder in attendance. Others present included Tim Sanders, David Hollenbeck, Steve Carter, Gordon White, Steve Strains, Patricia Lundberg, Vincent Galiati, Ron Johnson, Jim Stinson, Celina Weatherwax, Deb Butterfield, Richard Gardner, and Kathy Dubie.

Mr. Clark diverted from the agenda to discuss the hiring of an executive director for the RDA. He said that the RDA members have been fortunate to have had the services of Tim Sanders for the past several months, even though he has also been working full time as the local director for the Indiana Economic Development Corporation. Mr. Clark indicated his desire that Mr. Sanders be available to accept the appointment as the RDA's first full time executive director. Harley Snyder moved and Howard Cohen seconded that the board unanimously hire Tim Sanders as its executive director. After a brief discussion, Mr. Clark said they intend to use a compensation consultant to determine the proper salary commensurate with similar positions. The study could include other RDA positions. Mr. Joiner offered an amendment to include that the position will be evaluated no later than the first quarter. Mr. Snyder amended his motion to include the language, and the motion passed to hire Tim Sanders as the executive director.

The board discussed the proposed statement of values, created and discussed by the committee. Gus Olympidis, committee chair, explained each category. Items discussed included transparency, non-partisanship, boldness, accountability, and efficiency. Bill Joiner moved that the proposed statement of values be accepted. The motion was seconded by Lou Martinez. A discussion concerning the document and the order of the categories followed. Bill Joiner changed his original motion to moved that the second document, created through the preceding discussion be adopted. All in favor.

Regarding the issue of a legal counsel for the RDA, Mr. Clark said David Hollenbeck has been very helpful. The board members need to decide if they want a full-time, in-house counsel or something else. The Attorney General and his staff also have offered to be of assistance. Mr. Clark would like to find a way to have both of them. Mr. Hollenbeck said he has enjoyed working with the board, and the services of the Attorney General are also invaluable. He suggesting coordinating a local counsel with the Attorney General. The AG would provide information at the state level. Mr. Hollenbeck said that a good relationship can exist. Further discussion regarding process in hiring/accepting an attorney(s) followed. All board members agreed that the process should not be lengthy. Regarding the MOU submitted by the Attorney General, the board was told it includes a 30-day termination clause. After further discussion, Gus Olympidis moved to retain both a local attorney and the Attorney General subject to submission of a list of clients from both David Hollenbeck and the Attorney General. No second to the motion was made.

After further discussion, Ned Ruff moved that the RDA retain David Hollenbeck and the Attorney General in the relationship outlined by them during the meeting; that the RDA will enter into the MOU with the Attorney General, that within weeks Attorney Hollenbeck will submit fees and a list of clients through the executive director and will work along the lines as discussed while the executive director prepares an RFQ, which will be ready by the next meeting, sent out and reviewed. A second was made by Lou Martinez and passed unanimously. Tim Sanders asked the Attorney General to prepare a final MOU. Mr. Ruff suggested a six-month period, and Mr. Cohen suggested two years.

Regarding the by-laws, Attorney Hollenbeck said the statute allows the RDA to establish these. He has worked with Mr. Olympidis and has created a draft which should be reviewed in the context of visions and values. The roles of the officers should be defined. More revisions by Attorney Hollenbeck will be made.

Regarding the matter of ethics, Howard Cohen briefly explained the work of the subcommittee. Mr. Clark said that the State Code of Ethics was established for state employees. A discussion about RDA members' obligations followed. Mr. Hollenbeck said that director of the state Ethics Commission believes that the RDA board members are appointees of the state. He added that the RDA can submit its own set of ethic rules and possibly get the state's permission to adopt them. Mr. White, office of the Attorney General, believes the RDA is under the state's ethics policy. Further discussion followed. On a motion by Gus Olympidis and a second by Bill Joiner the RDA members agreed to ratify their ethics policy. Mr. Clark offered to share the policy with the State Ethics Commission's executive director.

Regarding the search for a consultant, Mr. Sanders suggested putting together a committee from board members to work with him on an RFQ. When prepared, it will be circulated to the board.

On a motion by Gus Olympidis and a second by Bill Joiner the standardized application was adopted.

Bill Joiner briefly reported on the banking working group and announced that subsequent meetings are being scheduled.

Tim Sanders announced that he will be advertising for an assistant in the near future. Deb Butterfield has offered the Valparaiso Chamber's services in developing an RDA website.

The next meeting will be held on December 6, 2005.

On a motion by Lou Martinez and a second by Bill Joiner the meeting was adjourned.